



**U.S. Army Corps
of Engineers**

Walla Walla District
Public Affairs Office

News Release

News Release No. 02-08

Date:
Feb. 25, 2002

Contact:
Dutch Meier

Phone: (509) 527-7020

Safety, precision and schedule top priorities as Corps repairs 372-ton lock doors at Lower Granite Dam

Walla Walla, Wash., – For the next few months, the only river traffic going up and down the Lower Snake River past Lower Granite Dam will be fish.

River traffic has stopped so Army engineers can repair stressed locks in need of repair. Since April of 1975, an average of 1,500 vessels pass through the locks every year, about 70 percent of them commercial barges carrying two million tons of grain, wood products, petroleum and other products up and down the Snake River.

In 1998, cracks caused by fatigue were discovered in the downstream doors of the locks, or “miter gates”. The Corps monitored the cracks and determined that they would need to be taken out of service for 92 days while repairs to the gate were made.

Repair work began on Jan. 28 of this year and the locks are expected to be back in service by April 29. The cost of the project is \$1.8 million.

“Our foremost concern is safety and that the job is done well and on schedule”, said Bob Hollenbeck, project manager for the Lower Granite gate repair.

Each leaf of the gates is 123 feet tall, 42 feet wide and weighs 372 tons. After the locks were drained, the gates were lifted off their hinges, or “pintles,” by hydraulic jacks at the bottom and steadied by hydraulic arms at the top as they are moved four feet so that the pintles and gate seals can be replaced.

Repairs and reinforcements will also be made to the doors, preparing them for service for years to come. This is the first time the doors have ever been removed and this will be the longest lock outage the Snake River has seen.

-MORE-

Public Affairs Office, Walla Walla District Headquarters, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 201 N. Third Ave, Walla Walla, WA 99362-1876
Phone (509) 527-7020 FAX (509) 527-7824 CELL (509) 520-1468
Web site: www.nwww.usace.army.mil E-mail: cenww-pa@usace.army.mil

CORPS REPAIRS LOCK/2-2-2

The Walla Walla District has five navigation locks that are used by commercial and recreational vessels. The locks are used to move vessels from one elevation to another. Lower Granite is one of four dams on the lower Snake River operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, creating an inland seaport at Lewiston, Idaho.

The lower Snake River dams provide more than \$324 million in benefits each year from hydropower, transportation and water supply and cost \$36.5 million annually to maintain. The locks at Lower Granite Dam are some of the largest in the world, lifting vessels 100 feet.

-30-